

More Choices and More Chances for Young People at Skills NorthWest

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Motivating young people to get on in their careers, and tackling the 'NEET' generation has been firmly placed in the spotlight in the last week. In the North West this challenge was met head at Skills NorthWest. Over 17,000 young people descended on Manchester Central to be shown that they do have choices as well as a chance to get on in their future careers.

Skills NorthWest, run in partnership with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in the North West, is the region's biggest training and careers event and its practical, interactive nature demonstrated that learning doesn't just take place in the classroom and that practical skills are just as important as writing essays and sitting exams.

Addressing the issue of 16-19 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) is high on the government's agenda and events such as Skills NorthWest are vital if doors are to be opened for young people across the region who might otherwise drop out of school or become caught in a cycle of unskilled work and unemployment.

Packed full of hands-on skills demonstrations and interactive activities from some of the region's biggest employers and learning providers, including Siemens, British Nuclear Group and United Utilities, the event provided students with a chance to try their hand at work-essential skills and to talk to people with true industry experience.

Paul Holme, Regional Director of Skills, LSC North West said: "This event provided a great opportunity for schools from the North West to get out of the classroom and see what career opportunities are on offer. From further education to Apprenticeships, vocational training to joining the army, there was something for each and every visitor to try their hand at."

Skills NorthWest is now a well-established annual event which brings together more than 50 employers, colleges, learning providers and universities from across the North West to form a 'one-stop' careers shop. It's a chance for young people in years 10, 11, 12 and 13, as well as college and university students, to meet with learning providers and employers and try their hands at jobs they are interested in before they take important decisions about the subjects they will study or careers they will pursue.

The event afforded exhibitors with the opportunity to meet face to face with young people. Zoe Horne, Northern Racing College commented: "There was a wide range of industries for the young visitors to explore. Quality and quantity was in abundance throughout the three days."

Angelo Lilley, United Utilities added: "It was an excellent event with an opportunity for large numbers of young people to see us and for us to interact with students from all over the region."

Paul Holme continued: "Skills NorthWest continues to provide a great opportunity for learners to see just what is out there. It creates a positive and relaxed environment for young people to find out more about education and the world of work and ultimately to make informed decisions that will help them achieve their true potential."

Ends

Learning and Skills Council:

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

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